

REMARKS

This Amendment is filed in response to the non-final Office Action dated February 24, 2010, and is respectfully submitted to be fully responsive to the rejections raised therein. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration on the merits and allowance are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-3 and 6-15 are pending, of which claim 1 is independent. Claims 6-15 have been withdrawn from consideration. By way of the present Amendment, Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite "a self-washing step of rotating said elastic polishing member, in a position spaced from a position which said washing step is conducted in, supplying the same liquid as a liquid used in said washing step to said elastic polishing member, and, in this condition, deforming said elastic polishing member by pressing said elastic polishing member against a rod-like or hollow cylindrical pressing unit so as thereby to wash said elastic polishing member, wherein said washing step and said self-washing step are conducted alternatively." Applicants have canceled claims 3 and 4.

Entry of the Amendment is respectfully requested.

I. Formalities

Applicants thank the Examiner for considering the references submitted with the Information Disclosure Statement filed on April 19, 2005.

The abstract of the disclosure is objected to because it is more than a single paragraph and because it refers to purported merits of the invention. By way of the present Amendment, Applicants have amended the Abstract in a manner believed to overcome the objection. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection are respectfully requested.

II Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite.

By way of the present Amendment, Applicants have deleted the phrase “wherein, after the washing step, the self-washing is conducted within the time for conveying the lens mold.” Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

III. Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

Claims 1-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over JP 2001353650 to Tabata et al. (hereinafter “Tabata”) in view of JP S64-23224 to Murakami et al (hereinafter “Murakami”). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection for at least the following reasons.

Claim 1 has been herein amended to recite (with emphasis added), among other features, “a self-washing step of rotating said elastic polishing member, in a position spaced from a position which said washing step is conducted in, supplying the same liquid as a liquid used in said washing step to said elastic polishing member, and, in this condition, deforming said elastic polishing member by pressing said elastic polishing member against a rod-like or hollow cylindrical pressing unit so as thereby to wash said elastic polishing member, wherein said washing step and said self-washing step are conducted alternatively.”

The combined teachings of Tabata and Murakami do not disclose or suggest these features, and furthermore that it would not have been obvious to have modified the combined references to provide such features.

The Examiner alleges that because Murakami discloses that the self-washing step may be performed simultaneously with the washing process, these steps may also be performed

separately or alternatively (see Office Action, page 5). The Examiner also alleges that the self-cleaning is performed at a place distant from a surface to be cleaned (Office Action, page 5).

However, the main purpose of the device disclosed in Murakami is “to provide a cleaning brush apparatus capable of cleaning the surface portion of a brush body thereof simultaneously and continuously while performing a cleaning task without interrupting the cleaning task” (page 3, third full paragraph, emphasis added; see also paragraph spanning pages 6 and 7). Therefore, Murakami explicitly teaches away from alternatively performing the washing and the self-washing steps, as recited in claim 1.

In addition, Murakami teaches away from providing “a self-washing step of rotating said elastic polishing member, in a position spaced from a position which said washing step is conducted in,” as recited in claim 1. While Murakami discloses that the brush body is cleaned at a location that is distant from the surface to be cleaned, the brush body 2 and the surface to be cleaned A are not moved away from one another prior to the cleaning of the brush body (see FIG. 2). Thus, the rotating of the brush body 2 in a self-washing step in Murakami is not performed in a position spaced from a position in which the washing step is performed. In other words, the rotating of the brush body 2 is performed in the exact same position for both the washing step and the self-washing step and at the same time.

Furthermore, because Murakami teaches that the self-washing and washing steps are performed simultaneously and continuously, Murakami teaches away from rotating the brush body 2 during self-washing at a position that is spaced from the position of the washing step, because this would naturally cause a break in the washing. Therefore, one of ordinary skill in the art would not have been led to modify the combined teachings of Tabata and Murakami to

include “a self-washing step of rotating said elastic polishing member, in a position spaced from a position which said washing step is conducted in.”

In addition, it is respectfully submitted that it would not have been obvious to combined Tabata and Murakami in the manner proposed by the Examiner. Tabata discloses a polisher in a lens polishing process not a washing process. It is respectfully submitted that the polisher disclosed by Tabata does not require a self-washing, because the polishing pad 3, 12 must be exchanged after polishing one or a plurality of lenses. In order to exchange the polishing member, the polishing member 3 may be stuck to the polisher 1 by pressure-sensitive adhesive double coated tape (paragraph 0030). Therefore one of ordinary skill in the art would not have been led to modify the method taught by Tabata to include a self-washing step as taught by Murakami because there would be no need in Tabata to remove contamination on the cleaning body.

Furthermore, Murakami discloses, in one embodiment, pressing a pair of rollers 6a, 6b against a cleaning brush body 2, but does not disclose pressing a rod-like polishing member against a pressing unit (see FIG. 2). The roller 6a rotates at rotating speed V_a and the roller 6b rotates at a different rotating speed V_b to cause the brush body 2 to deform. Murakami discloses, in another embodiment, a colliding body 8, i.e., the alleged rod-like member, which moves thin string-shaped bodies of the brush body 2 (see page 6, first full paragraph; FIG. 4). However, the colliding body 8 does not deform an elastic member.

On the other hand, the claimed invention provides a rod-like or hollow cylindrical pressing unit which has a self-washing ability that is higher than that of either of the

embodiments of Murakami due to friction between a surface of the pressing unit and the elastic polishing member.

In light of the above, claim 1 is patentable over Tabata and Murakami because the combined teachings of Tabata and Murakami fail to disclose or suggest “a self-washing step of rotating said elastic polishing member, in a position spaced from a position which said washing step is conducted in, supplying the same liquid as a liquid used in said washing step to said elastic polishing member, and, in this condition, deforming said elastic polishing member by pressing said elastic polishing member against a rod-like or hollow cylindrical pressing unit so as thereby to wash said elastic polishing member, wherein said washing step and said self-washing step are conducted alternatively.”

Claims 2-5 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependency on claim 1.

Claims 1-3 and 5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over JP 2001-353650 to Tabata in view of EP 0764478 to Maekawa et al (hereinafter “Maekawa”). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection for at least the following reasons.

Claim 1 recites, inter alia, “supplying the same liquid as a liquid used in said washing step to said elastic polishing member” and “deforming said elastic polishing member by pressing said elastic polishing member against a rod-like or hollow cylindrical pressing unit.”

Murakami discloses that cleaning liquid is supplied from a nozzle 8 to the semiconductor substrate 1 to be cleaned, while water is supplied from a different nozzle 16 to the region where the cleaning member 3 and dressing member 15 contact one another (see column 5, lines 29-33 and column 6, lines 51-59). Furthermore, Tabata does not disclose a self-washing step.

Therefore, neither Tabata or Murakami disclose or suggest “supplying the same liquid as a liquid used in said washing step to said elastic polishing member.”

In addition, Murakami discloses that the cleaning unit 6 rubs against a flat dressing member 15 to scrape one surface of the cleaning unit (see column 6, lines 41-42; and FIG. 1). There is no teaching or suggestion of deforming the cleaning unit 6 or of using a rod-like or hollow cylindrical member to deform the cleaning unit 6.

Accordingly, claim 1 is patentable over Tabata and Maekawa because the proposed combination of Tabata and Maekawa does not disclose or suggest all of the features recited in claim 1.

Claims 2 and 3 are patentable over the Examiner's proposed combination of Tabata and Maekawa at least by virtue of their dependency on claim 1.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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CUSTOMER NUMBER

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